



## PRESS RELEASE

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire – 4 September 2025

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### GLOBAL EXPERTS TO CONVENE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE FOR THE 2ND ECOWAS LASSA FEVER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**Leading scientists, researchers, public health advocates, policymakers, and health practitioners from across the globe will converge in Abidjan from 8 to 11 September 2025, for the 2nd ECOWAS Lassa Fever International Conference (#ELFIC2025), the foremost international forum dedicated to tackling one of West Africa's most persistent public health challenges.**

Organised by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), in collaboration with regional and international partners, ELFIC 2025 will provide a platform for sharing the latest scientific advances, innovative control strategies and collaborative approaches for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of Lassa fever – a viral haemorrhagic fever endemic in parts of West Africa, associated with high morbidity and mortality.

Held under the theme ***“Beyond Borders: Strengthening Regional Cooperation to combat Lassa and emerging Infectious Diseases”***, the four-day conference will begin with an opening ceremony led by the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Robert Beugré Mambé, and will feature keynote addresses, high-level panels and technical workshops covering:

- Advances in vaccine and diagnostic development
- Community engagement and preparedness strategies
- Surveillance, outbreak response and cross-border collaboration
- Policy frameworks for sustainable control and elimination

The conference will also feature a high-level ministerial roundtable discussion co-convened by the Director General of the West African Health Organisation, Dr. Melchior Athanase AïSSI, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Nigeria, Professor Muhammad Ali Pate, and the Minister for Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Health Coverage in Côte d'Ivoire M. Pierre N'Gou Dimba.

Lassa fever remains a serious public health threat, where one in 5 infections result in severe disease, and the virus affects several organs, such as the liver, spleen and kidneys. Beyond its health impact, the lack of a vaccine and the absence of an approved antiviral drug for Lassa fever drive serious socio-economic consequences, particularly for rural and underserved communities. ELFIC 2025 will foster dialogue between scientists, policymakers and communities to ensure that research outcomes are translated into tangible action.

The programme will also include exhibitions, showcasing innovations from research institutions, NGOs and private sector partners, as well as networking sessions aimed at strengthening regional and international collaboration.

High-level participation is expected from Ministries of Health of ECOWAS Member States, and strategic partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, African Development Bank (AFDB), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), KfW, along with other international stakeholders committed to epidemic preparedness and response.



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Dr Melchior Athanase J. C. Aïssi, Director General of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), stated: *“This conference is a call to action to confront the persistent challenges associated with Lassa fever by advancing research, diagnostics, and community-led solutions, while enhancing preparedness and response strategies against zoonotic diseases.”*

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For further information, kindly contact: **WAHO Communications Office** at Email: [communication@wahooas.org](mailto:communication@wahooas.org)  
or visit ELFIC2025 official website: <https://www.lfic2025.org/>